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ABSORPTION:

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A RATIONAL AND CONSISTENT

SYSTEM

OF

MESMERISM;

EXPOSING MANY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL

ERRORS

PREVALENT UPON THIS SUBJECT.

"Nature unadorned is adorned the most."

EMBRACING, ALSO,

UNIVERSAL CONNEXION,

AND

THE CONSEQUENCES OF MESMERISM.

BY DR. A. YORKE,

PROFESSOR OF MESMERISM.

COMPILED CHIEFLY FROM NOTES OF HIS NUMEROUS EXPERIMENTS AND LETTERS TO
HIS PUPILS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

§ PHILADELPHIA:

GRUBB & REAZOR,

178 NORTH THIRD ST.

1844.

The following Works, among many others, possess considerable interest ; for the historical and matter-of-fact information which they furnish.

"MESMERISM ; or System of the reciprocal actions and re-actions," &c., by Dr. Frederick Anton Mesmer. Edited by Dr. Chas. C. Wolfart,—Berlin, 1814—German.

"COMMENTARY UPON MESMERISM," by Dr. Chas. C. Wolfart ; 1815—German.

"TOWNSHEND'S FACTS IN MESMERISM"—English.

DELUESE'S WORK—French to English.

TESTE'S LATE WORK—do do.

"ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH ANIMAL MAGNETISM AS A THERAPEUTICAL AGENT," by Dr. C. A. F. Kluge, Prof. of Surgery at the University of Berlin ; 3d edition ; 1819—German.

"ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN THE APPARENT MAGICAL NATURE OF ANIMAL MAGNETISM, according to Physiological and Psychological Principles," by Professor Eschenweyer ; 1816—German.

"PATHETISM," by Rev. La Roy Sunderland ; New York, 1842—English.

"THE WONDERS OF MAGNETISM," by Dr. Louis Vogle—German.

"PROGRESS OF ANIMAL MAGNETISM IN NEW ENGLAND," by M. Poyen—English.

STILLING'S WRITINGS—German.

WIRTH'S TREATIES—do.

"SOMNAMBULISM," by Prof. F. Fischer, of Bazil ; 1839—German.

"THE MAGNET," (still publishing,) by Rev. La Roy Sunderland ; New York—English.

PSYCOGRAPHY," by Dr. Robert H. Collyer ; Philada., 1843—English.

"RESEARCHES INTO VITAL MAGNETISM AND CLAIRVOYANCE," by Dr. J. C. Passavant ; 2d revised edition—1837. Contains a good *history* of Mesmerism, from the earliest ages down.—German.

The latest work from the German press, is by Prof. Eunemoser, of Munich, entitled,

"MAGNETISM IN ITS RELATION TO NATURE AND RELIGION,"—1842. It is highly spoken of by those who have perused it.

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DEDICATION.

To the faithful, the candid pioneers of Mesmerism, in the United States and in Europe; in token of admiration for their benevolent, persevering, yet unpopular labors in the cause of truth; this brief treatise is respectfully dedicated, by

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

IN throwing hastily together the few following pages, which give but a brief outline of my SYSTEM OF MESMERISM, I have rather consulted the necessitous condition of the subject itself, than my own interest. For it is my sincere desire to dispel, if possible, a portion of the darkness and superstition which thickly envelope the noblest subject within the sphere of our investigation—a subject teeming with the most profound interest to the whole world, and worthy the attention of the mightiest intellects.

The exceeding brevity which I have been compelled to adopt, I fear will render my remarks somewhat incomprehensible to the first view of general readers; yet, to those who are investigating the subject, for whose perusal they are chiefly intended, they will be found perfectly comprehensible.

In the main, my remarks are entirely new. I am aware that my positions in *Part Second*, will be laughed at by many skeptics, who reject the whole subject of Mesmerism. But I do not heed this—quod scripsi scripsi—I have given my opinion with candor; and am willing to abide by the consequences.

I entered the field of Mesmerism under a very unfavourable opinion; honestly disbelieving all that I heard, and saw of it. About a year ago, however, I accidentally became convinced of my error by my own experiments; since which moment, I have devoted to it, both by day and night, my undivided attention; and kept up an incessant, untiring, practical investigation, including several hundred subjects of various temperaments, ages, habits, and conditions; and under almost every variety of season, location, and circumstance imaginable. During my investigation, I gave every thing that met my view, which professed to throw light upon the subject, a faithful, and an impartial examination. But instead of finding the subject reduced to such laws, as in reality seem to govern it, I found, that it had been treated, by most writers, in such a vague, mystified, and inaccessible manner, that I almost despaired of ever arriving at any rational conclusions.

But, I took facts for my guide; I saw that there was a foundation to the thing itself; and, determined to spare neither labor nor expense to arrive at the truth, I toiled on in defiance of the scoffs and gibes of the prejudiced, and but little heeding the dreads and fears of the superstitious; leaving not a stone unstruck, which seemed to promise a single spark of light upon the subject. And thus

from an entire skeptic at the beginning of my researches, I have been led on, step by step, to appreciate and adopt the sublime truths of Mesmerism; bordering closely upon "the spirit land."

The conclusions to which my numerous experiments have led me, as will be seen by the following pages, are greatly at variance with the opinions which have been adopted, as it were, by common consent, by most mesmerisers, down to the present time.

My system of ABSORPTION effectually abolishes the glaring, the ridiculous, the inconsistent idea, that the *imperial* "*will*" performs so many curious, absurd, mystical, sublime, whimsical, ay, fearful convolutions, and gyrations of action, as have, by our "*Lecturers*," been attributed to it; by which they have frightened the sober notions of our philosophers, and rendered Mesmerism a subject for mirth, even among scientific men.

Although the following system may disturb the felicity of some of the *potent willed* quack mesmerisers, who are spreading themselves throughout the country, I feel confident, that it will be gladly received by all whose purpose is the discovery of truth. And, even should they have adopted the common hypothesis of "*will*," they will recognize, at once, the errors under which they have been laboring; and, generally willing to make an exchange of what they cannot but own to be a defenceless mass of confusion, for that which may be brought within the sphere of our accustomed modes of reasoning, they will, willingly, suffer their tottering fabric of prejudice or superstition, to tumble uncoercedly into that burial place, where, hidden from the unmerciful, relentless, stare of ridicule, the darling opinions "that were," are lulled into silent repose; whence nought, save their shapeless ghosts, are suffered to escape, to wander down to future generations, playthings for the mirth of school-boys.

Should my other duties permit me to do so, I shall, within a short period, publish an elaborate work on the subject of Mesmerism. In the meantime, I offer, to the investigating public, the present brief pamphlet; trusting, that by eradicating some of the fundamental errors prevalent upon this subject, which have hidden its real worth from the view of scientific men, who otherwise must have seen and adopted it, I shall discharge a duty, which the rights of my species demand.

A. YORKE.

PART I.

ABSORPTION.

CHAPTER I.

MAN is very justly considered the most exalted creature of the animal kingdom. Besides this, the intellectual faculties, with which his species is endowed, which, through means with which he is every day becoming more and more familiar, may be elevated to a far more exalted capacity than their ordinary condition exhibits, justly entitle him to be ranked in the Kingdom of Spirits.

For the purpose of being systematic, I shall consider man in three distinct divisions. First, THE BODY. Second, THE VITAL PRINCIPLE. Third, THE MIND.

In the first, I shall include the solids, together with all the ponderable fluids, of the human economy. In the second, I shall include that principle, which has for its basis, an imponderable fluid, upon which depend the life, and action of the system. The third, which is the mind, or soul, is entirely immaterial; and includes thought and sensation. Some, indeed, have added a fourth division, to embrace the soul, which they have considered as being distinct from the mind. Be this as it may, the above three divisions are sufficient for my present purpose. Nor do I see the utility of going beyond this third division, and then confining ourselves to a fourth: just as well might we add a fifth and a sixth. For, whilst the fourth division is entirely beyond our comprehension, equally so is the third; the existence of which, however, we are necessarily compelled to admit; i. e. a capacity for thought and sensation. But of the manner in which this capacity acts, we are totally ignorant; and may ever expect to remain so, whilst under our present terrestrial organization.

Of the first division, I need say but little in this place, as we are already familiar with it. The second, then, only remains for our consideration.

This embodies, by means of an imponderable fluid, and its properties, the connecting link between mind and matter; it embodies the principle of life, and the medium by which the mind, which is strictly *immaterial*, acts upon, and influences the body,

which latter, is strictly *material*; as well as the medium by which the body, when influenced by outward objects, communicates, in turn, its influence to the mind.

The existence of this fluid was for some time a matter of doubt to many who attempted to investigate the subject; but at present, I think that there is no practical mesmerizer who has arrived at any degree of proficiency in his art, that entertains even the slightest remnant of doubt upon this point. I consider it unnecessary, therefore, to offer any especial proof of its existence, beyond what may be gathered from the tenor of this work. Several speculations have been advanced, for the purpose of identifying it with the electric fluid; which have been, thus far, unsuccessful. And, as my present means of making a chemical analysis of it, for the purpose of determining the precise quantities of any primitive substances, that may enter into its composition, are entirely inadequate to that task, I shall content myself, for the present, by denying its strict identity with electricity; at the same time contending that that fluid forms its basis, which, however, becomes variously modified (as I shall hereafter show) by a variety of other substances, as it occupies the different parts of the system. Was it pure electricity, its effects would be uniform; and, if all subjects were not affected precisely alike by its influence, at least the same subject would be affected precisely alike by the influence of every mesmerizer, which is not the case; for every individual possesses this fluid under a modification peculiar to himself.

This medium has received a variety of names, according to the caprice or inclination of each individual treating of it; such as—“*Vital Principle*,” “*Nervous Force*,” “*Magnetic Medium*,” and some others. But I shall call it the MESMERIC FLUID; that being a name of generic import, and one that will exclude no principle which may hereafter be discovered to belong to it.

That fluid, with which the system of the subject is charged, when *under mesmeric influence*, being that which abounds in negative electricity, I shall term *Positive Mesmerism*. Its contrary, of which the subject is at that time deprived, and which abounds in positive electricity, I shall term *Negative Mesmerism*.

This fluid, like its basis electricity, is universal; and in addition to this, by its being modified by other substances, it is capable of pervading, in right lines, all known substances (which I have yet tested) whether conductors of electricity, or otherwise, and whether conductors of common light, or otherwise, i. e. whether transparent or opaque. This latter condition it is, which renders it a medium for vision to the lucid subject; as the common light is a medium, for sight, to the natural eye, and gives him that capacity of *clear-sightedness*, or *Clairvoyance*, by which he is enabled to see, distinctly, through substances which are opaque, with respect to common light.

This arrangement is as conceivable, and as admissible to our perceptions, as, that common light pervades *glass, water, the atmosphere*, and other *transparent* substances; and thus informs our sight of the presence of objects beyond them. Nor would it be any more absurd, for a person who is blind, and does not possess the natural means of vision, to deny the existence of light, and its properties, because he is unable to comprehend them, than for one, who has not been in a lucid mesmeric state, to deny these principles of the *mesmeric fluid*, merely because he has not personally realized them.

This fluid has the atmosphere for a reservoir of its general principle, electricity; yet, in its modified condition, resides upon the nervous system of animals, and, more particularly, upon the nerves (including the brain) of the human economy. Whilst, in this latter capacity, it furnishes, as I have before said, the connexion between the material, and immaterial parts of our nature; was it not for this, the spirit must necessarily exist separately from the body; and the mind would lose its ability to recognize the individual habitation to which it belongs. As it is, however, the body becomes a repository of thought and sensation, by means of this connecting agency.

Each external cause of sensation, produces a peculiar modification of this fluid, which is then deposited upon an appropriate part of the nervous system, where its peculiar import is recognized by the mind. By the commingling of these various deposits, which first originate in simple sensations, material is furnished for all the combinations of ideas which we possess; and thus is means established for the support of an endless train of thought and action.

I shall leave the further consideration of this part of the subject, until I come to treat of the *Consequences of Mesmerism*.

This fluid is subject to disorganization; which causes pain, and disease in the system; and, good clairvoyant subjects tell me, that they can detect this disorganization, by the fluid's exhibiting a dark, dull color, in contradistinction from that of the healthily organized fluid; which, they say, has invariably a white, luminous appearance.

When a pain, &c., is to be removed by mesmeric application, the immediate cause of which is, always, an unhealthy organization of this fluid, it is easily to be understood, how, when this portion of the fluid, which has become unhealthily modified, or decomposed by some means or other, has been dislodged, and a portion of healthy fluid established in its stead, by the operation, the pain is removed.

One of the most valuable laws, as I shall hereafter show, which governs this fluid, is its tendency to seek an equilibrium upon the nervous system.

Not only does this subtile fluid serve as a medium to connect thought with our individual bodies, but also, by its action upon the motor nerves, furnishes the muscles with the power of contractility and relaxation; thus rendering our bodies capable of motion and action.

It appears to me, that, in order to contract a muscle, the poles of certain fibres of the nerves, are thrown into peculiar positions, with relation to each other, in such a manner, as to cause one set of poles to become *positively* mesmerized; whilst the other, on the contrary, remains *negatively* mesmerized; which conditions produce a principle of attraction, similar to that manifested by the opposite poles of electricity, and thus cause the contraction in question.

If, for instance, we suppose that the fibres, at one pole, are erected in such a manner as to extend their points, which points may serve for the collection of negative mesmerism, in a similar manner to that in which steel points serve to collect the electric fluid, and that the other poles, by being relaxed, absorb, in their turn, the positive mesmerism, we have no difficulty, whatever, in understanding how each pole may be supplied with its essential principle, from the adjacent parts, or from the general reservoir itself.

It is still difficult, however, to determine *how* these nervous fibres are brought into action by the command of the mind. It seems equally difficult, too, to determine whether the mind acts independently, in issuing its mandates to the fluid, or whether the action of the fluid (which is, of course, *modified* by external circumstances) takes place in accordance with some former actions, which it has performed. For the peculiar state in which the fluid was left, by its former actions, united with the influence of external causes; may, peradventure, produce, as a necessary and unavoidable consequence, not only the present action, but, at the same time, the *will* to perform this action.

This last proposition, which is not without some share of supporting evidence, throws the action of the mind into the position of an effect, instead of a cause; i. e. makes the *fluid* the motive power, and *thought* the consequence; and was it established, would save us the trouble of enquiring *how* the fluid is brought into action by the *command* of the mind. But as it seems impossible to arrive at any satisfactory conclusions, with respect to the manner in which the immaterial and material parts of our nature are connected, I will quit the discussion of this mysterious question, for the present, and proceed to speak of more tangible matters—maintaining the position which I have taken with regard to the poles of the nervous fibres, and premising, still farther, (as my practice corroborates it) that the negative mesmeric (electric) points, when in action, are *generally* directed towards the extremities

Each individual part of the system possesses this fluid under a modification peculiar to itself. This is strongly manifested by the brain, where each portion serves for the occupation of some particular kind of thought, sensation, &c. And, further, as no two individuals are precisely of the same constitution and disposition, neither do any two persons possess this fluid in precisely the same degree, either with respect to quantity, or quality.

Lastly; the fluids belonging to the systems of two or more individuals, may, by means of the mesmeric operation, be brought into communication with each other, when many curious, interesting, and important phenomena may often be developed.

CHAPTER II.

Although the fluid, of which I have been treating in the former chapter, the positive kind of which constitutes the material for mesmerizing, is possessed in different degrees by different individuals, no one, at all acquainted with the subject, will pretend, that the ability to mesmerize is confined to a few individuals exclusively; yet, it is not to be denied, that, like with every other faculty, with which we are endowed, nature has dealt more liberally with some of us than others, in measuring out our capacity to mesmerize. She has, on the other hand, also, been partial to some, by constituting them more susceptible to the mesmeric influence, than others; thus, making them natural heirs to the benefits to be derived from it.

The different degrees of mesmeric capacity depend on certain conditions of temperament, and mental organization.

Those, with whom the *sanguine*, or *bilious* temperament predominates, usually possess positive mesmeric fluid in a strong degree; and, hence, they have, by their nature, a supply of the necessary material for mesmerizing. Yet this alone does not constitute them efficient mesmerizers; for, let it be especially observed, there is a vast difference between the mere possession of the *material* for mesmerizing, and the *power* to call this material into action.

The capacity to use this material to advantage, consists in a peculiar mental organization, in an ability to exert a strong degree of mental energy, an irresistible and unremitting determination to succeed in what we have undertaken to create, and support, untiringly, a superior degree of *nervous action*. This is usually, chiefly manifested by the organ of *Firmness* being well developed; which renders us capable of continuing in any pursuit, in which

we may have engaged, at the suggestion of the other organs of the brain. Although this constitutes the *sine qua non* of the mesmeric power, this power is greatly modified, as well as strengthened, by a liberal share of *Benevolence*; which is, perhaps, of as much, or even more importance, than the leading principle of continuance, itself.*

Those who are naturally more susceptible to the mesmeric influence, generally have the *nervous*, or *lymphatic* temperament predominating; and possess an abundant share of the negative mesmeric fluid. (It may be well to remark here, that the peculiar physical constitution, proposed for the mesmerizer, as well as this contrary one, here offered, for the subject, or recipient, pre-suppose the residence of the particular kind of fluid, which I have allotted to each of them; which peculiar degree, of positive or negative fluid, is essential to the well-being of each, to whom it has been allotted, whilst they are in their *natural* state, and, when the positive and negative degrees are changed, from what the constitution naturally requires, mesmeric phenomena are produced.)

Certain conditions of the mental organization, are also advantageous to the recipient; the chief of which, is an ability to devote the whole attention to the mesmerizer. This is shown by the organ of *Concentrativeness* being strongly marked; which creates an ability to keep the attention fixed upon a single subject, to the exclusion of all other thoughts.

The recipient, too, should be of an amiable disposition, and free from any thing that would tend to render him, in the least degree, disagreeable to the operator.

The combinations of the physical and mental conditions, which I have here proposed, are seldom met with in any considerable degree of perfection. Those who are so happily constituted, are capable of producing truly wonderful effects; whilst those who possess the necessary conditions in part, are still able to produce some phenomena; yet there are many others, who, from an absolute absence of all such essential combinations, are totally incapable of either producing or receiving any beneficial effect, whatever.

CHAPTER III.

It is a lamentable truth, that, in addition to the very indifferent manner in which the *modus operandi* of mesmerism has heretofore been understood, *efforts* have even been made, by some who have

* See Part III., Chap. 3.

treated the subject, to render it even more mysterious and incomprehensible, than they, themselves, found it. We hear it, every day, most profoundly asserted, that *the fluid is subject to the will of the mesmerizer*—that the mesmerizer “wills” a thing to be done, and it is done; and all this *unconditionally*. And, without any further explanation, whatever, we are told, that the “will” of the mesmerizer, *sends out this fluid*; i. e. eradiates, directs it to the system of the subject; depositing it in this place, and that, at its option. Some *lecturers* upon the subject, have even been hardy enough to assert, that they have thrown subjects into the mesmeric state at the distance of half a mile, without knowing where they were at the time, and without their knowledge of the operation, &c.; and leave their hearers to understand, as best they can, *how their wills have eradiated a fluid, through a densely populated city, in every direction, to the distance of half a mile, until it has sought out, from among the crowd, the object for which it was intended, and there deposited itself, in strict obedience to the commands of its imperial master, the will.** Statements, of these kinds, are more readily made, than either understood or believed; and are but illy calculated to assist in establishing that confidence in the subject, of which, at present, it stands greatly in need. It is fully time, therefore, that such deleterious errors, which are rather the offspring of superstitious folly, combined with a morbid love of the pageantry of “mystic lore,” than of scientific reflection, should be eradicated, and a rational and comprehensible view of the subject taken; such an one, as will not presume to set at naught all the known laws of nature—nor challenge our credulity beyond its utmost stretch; but will comport with our daily observations of nature’s laws, and accord with the knowledge that we already possess of her operations, which cannot fail to enlist the attention of philosophers.

In order to produce mesmeric effects, the mesmeric fluid, of the operator, and that of the subject, are brought into communication, by contact, proixmity, or mutual correspondence; by which means they become so modified, as to commingle with each other, almost as though they were the common property of both.

Action of the nervous system, or of any part of it, requires the presence of a greater degree of negative mesmeric fluid, than *inaction*; or *action* requires a supply of negative mesmerism (electricity) whilst *inaction* may survive on positive mesmerism. In the mesmeric operation, the nervous system of the operator is thrown into voluntary, even energetic *action*—the negative mesmeric (electric) points of the fibres, of the nervous substance, are erected, and extended in such a manner, as to collect, most effectually, the negative mesmeric principle, essential to the condition

* See first note, Part II., Chap. 1.

of *action*. On the other hand, the nervous system of the subject of the operation, is suffered to relax into a state of repose and *inaction*; in this condition, it requires a less quantity of negative mesmerism than it already possesses; but, in its stead, a supply of positive mesmerism. The fluids of the two systems, are now connected, and the *operation* about to take place—the two conditions, of *activity* and *inactivity*, are present; one at either end of the chain—each with its peculiar want to be supplied, and each possessing that sort of fluid, which is not only unnecessary, but absolutely destructive, to its own continuance; yet the very desideratum of the other. As the *operation* continues, a *mutual exchange* of the fluids occurs; the negative mesmerism (electricity) passes to the *active* system of the operator, which requires its presence, whilst the positive mesmerism passes to the *inactive* system of the recipient, the condition of which, also, requires *its* presence. And in this manner the *operation of mesmerizing* is completed. But is this *exchange* of the fluids brought about by the “*will*” of the mesmerizer, *sending out, propelling, radiating, and directing a fluid to the system of the subject*, as has been heretofore universally contended? I think not; and I believe that every candid reader must agree with me in this opinion. Instead, however, of its being effected in so mysterious and improbable a manner, it is accomplished, as will be seen by what has already been said, by the simple process of *ABSORPTION*, with the existence of which principle, our daily observations have made us familiar.

I am fully aware, in making this correction, by substituting a theory based upon philosophic principles, for one, the leading feature of which is romance, that I shall greatly spoil mesmerism—not however, of its grandeur, its sublimity—not of its noble balmy purposes—not of its high benevolent, and sympathetic character—but of a part of one of its most attractive outward ornaments; namely, its mystery!! Nor am I ignorant of the prodigious consequences that must result to mankind, from the general application of the principles here laid down; but, of this, I shall speak in another chapter.

This *absorption* is not confined to either the operator, or the subject; but produces a *mutual exchange*, of the opposite kinds of fluid, between the two parties.

It will be seen, that the mesmerizer, by performing the *active* part of the operation, absorbs from the system of the subject, the negative mesmeric fluid; whilst the subject, in turn, by remaining *inactive*, absorbs the positive mesmeric fluid from the operator's system. Hence, each has become a recipient; the former, however, of negative mesmerism, (electricity,) which principle supports him in an *active*, and waking state; and the latter, of positive mesmeric fluid, who is then said to be *under mesmeric influence*.

CHAPTER IV.

This theory of *absorption*, is supported by an extensive range of phenomena which I have seen produced, and I know of none with which it does not satisfactorily accord.

How is it, I ask, that, if the fluid is subservient to, and *directed by the "will,"* we sometimes throw persons into the mesmeric state, when it is *not* our will to do so, and of which we are entirely ignorant at the time? For it not unfrequently occurs, that, at the end of a tedious operation on a *difficult* subject, the operator discovers one or more persons who are sitting near him, and whom he has had not the slightest intention to mesmerize, to be under mesmeric influence. Writers have not been sparing in their essays on *foreign influence*: i. e. the subject, when mesmerized, receiving the influence of those around him, which often causes some trouble to the operator to remove it; for this they have accounted, by supposing it to be produced, by the "*will*" of the bystanders, who merely wish to try their mesmeric skill. But concerning this *foreign absorption*, of which I have spoken above, i. e. the subject becoming mesmerized *without the will* of the operator; which is of nearly as frequent occurrence as the other, they have all remained perfectly quiet; perceiving no doubt, (as they easily might,) that their theory of "*will*" would not embrace it. The principles of *absorption*, however, will satisfactorily explain them both.

Again: a person who has made but one or two attempts to mesmerize, will often be found capable to remove the influence from a subject in a shorter time than it could be done by an experienced operator: the reason is obvious; namely, that the responsibility and novelty of his situation, with which he continues to be impressed during the whole time that the subject is under the influence, prevent the negative mesmerism (electricity,) from escaping into the general reservoir; hence it is retained upon his system—ready to be returned to the subject at the least notice. With the experienced operator, however, it is often different; for, at the end of his *operation*, he having nothing to keep his nervous system in involuntary action, relaxes it, and suffers the negative mesmerism which he has *absorbed* from the system of the subject, to pass into the atmosphere: (this, of course, is very essential when operating for the relief of disease: for it throws off the diseased fluid, and replaces it by a fresh supply from the general reservoir,) the consequence of which is, that when he desires to *awake* his subject, he is often compelled, first to re-collect a fresh supply of negative mesmerism to be returned to the subject, instead of that which he (the opera-

tor,) had absorbed. No one will presume to doubt, that in these circumstances, the *will* of the experienced mesmerizer is as strong as that of the inexperienced one, or even stronger.

Besides this *general* principle of absorption, which depends principally on the *positive and negative* qualities of the fluid, there is also a *secondary* principle which deserves our attention, and is equally important and interesting in its effects with the former.

It is this, that, as each part of the system possesses the fluid under a modification peculiar to itself, so each part has a tendency to absorb from the corresponding part of the system of another, in preference to any other part.

This principle is manifested in many ways, and particularly in that class of curious phenomena in which the *senses* of the operator and subject, are said to act in sympathy. If, for instance, when the conditions are such as may render the sympathy of *taste* demonstrable, the operator should take a sapid substance into his mouth, the gustatory organs of the subject may receive the same sapid impression, as that which the operator has received.

ELUCIDATION. In the first place, as I have already premised, each external cause of sensation produces a peculiar modification of the fluid; and also the negative mesmerism (electricity,) is particularly essential to nervous action. Now the operator has absorbed upon his gustatory organs, a superfluous quantity of this principle, from the corresponding organs of the subject: hence, the sapid body being brought into contact with his gustatory organs, produces a peculiar effect upon the fluid there residing, i. e. modifies it in a peculiar manner, by which it conveys to the mind the knowledge of some particular taste. If, for instance, the sapid body is an aromatic, its action upon the gustatory fluid is such as will change the qualities of that fluid, in such a manner that it will be recognized by the mind, to have been in contact with a body possessing aromatic properties. During the time that the operator is tasting, he is collecting the negative mesmeric principle for the action; and *whilst* he is making an *effort* to increase the taste in his own mouth, (supposing the subject to be still passive,) the subject will receive *no* impression by sympathy whatever, nor until the operator *relaxes* his *effort* to taste, when the gustatory organs of the subject, being called into action, will *re-absorb* from the corresponding organs of the operator the negative mesmeric principle, essential to the support of their action; (yet no longer necessary to the relaxed, or *inactive* state of the gustatory organs of the operator,) bearing with it the aromatic modification which it has received. Thus his organs of gustation receive the same sapid impression as those of the operator, and in a similar manner, convey a knowledge of it to his mind.

This phenomenon may likewise be produced by another person taking the place of the mesmerizer, (i. e. being put in communication with the subject,) demonstrating clearly, that the subject when

under mesmeric influence, may absorb from the system of another, a portion of negative mesmerism (electricity,) which did not originally belong to him.

In fact, I have seen a case of a young lady, in which, by this kind of *absorption*, severe strangulation was produced by the person who was in communication with her, having swallowed a small portion of capsicum annuum; and even after she was taken out of the *state*, the biting continued on her lips during several hours.

The same principles of re-absorption which I have here given, may be equally applied to the senses of *feeling and smelling*, (I have never yet seen a satisfactory case of sympathetic *hearing*: and for this reason shall pass over it, at present,) of vision, I shall speak in another place.

In *feeling*, if the operator's hand should be wounded in such a manner as will cause pain; a similar sensation will be produced on the corresponding part of the subject's system. If the hair of the former should be pulled, the latter will complain of his head; and, often after being awakened, will charge some one with having pulled his hair; which clearly proves my position, with regard to the peculiarities of the different parts of the system; and the mutual preference of the corresponding parts for each other.

In *smelling*, too, the olfactory sensations, which are often transferred very correctly, from the operator to the subject, are conveyed by the same process of *local* re-absorption.

When any corresponding parts of two systems are equally active, or equally inactive at the same time, no exchange of the fluids takes place by the secondary or *local* principle of mutual absorption, (yet, independent of this, a greater or less effect may sometimes be produced by the *general*, or positive and negative principle, which, by dint of the tendency, which the fluid has to seek an equilibrium, spreads its influence throughout the system.) And also, when any particular part or organ of the mesmerizer's system is thrown into action, whilst the corresponding one of the subject's system remains inactive, a mutual local absorption takes place, and that part, or organ of the subject, is brought under mesmeric influence. This is an elucidation of the mystery (concerning which, the wits of many of our amateur mesmerizers have been greatly at a loss) of that important branch of mesmerism—popularly termed “Local Magnetism.”

CHAPTER V.

It has been supposed, that, *during* the mesmeric operation, a community of thought and feeling was established between the operator and the subject—a unison of the action of the two minds

was kept up; and in accordance with whatever organs of the operator's brain were the most active, the corresponding organs of the subject's brain were excited by means of *sympathy*; and this, *during the operation*. This is an error as egregious as many others, which, before I finish this work, it will have fallen to my lot to correct: nor can I see any plausible philosophic excuse for it; for such communication from the operator to the subject, can only take place by re-action—re-absorption; whilst, on the contrary, *during the operation*, a direct *opposite* action of the corresponding organs is produced.

ELUCIDATION. When a particular faculty of the operator's mind is active, it becomes the province of the organ supporting the corresponding faculty of the subject, to supply with negative mesmerism, (electricity,) the like organ of the operator, which is in an *active* state; and in its turn, to absorb from that active organ, the positive mesmeric principle, which renders it more and more inactive. Thus, if that faculty of the operator which gives him the feeling of "*perseverantia omnia vincit*," is active, it will tend to exhaust the active principle of that faculty from the subject, who, by this means, allows himself to become flexible and subservient to the operator; and a suspension or relaxation of the activity of that faculty on the part of the operator, *during the operation*, is often attended by the risk of arousing the subject, by allowing him to re-absorb the active principle upon the organ in question.

If *benevolence* is active with the operator, and produces a feeling of pity and concern for the welfare of the subject—a desire to *give*: it necessarily absorbs the active principle of that faculty from the subject, as in the former case; and instead of "*benevolence*" being *excited* in the subject by *sympathy*, a *willingness* on the contrary to *receive* a benefice is established; in consequence of its action being depressed by exhaustion. The same may be said, on this point, with respect to the other *organs*; to some of which I shall allude in treating of the abuses of mesmerism.

I may also observe in this place, that, when an organ is exceedingly large and active in the brain of the subject, the operator is sometimes visibly affected by it; by *direct local absorption* from it. For a large and naturally active organ, whilst being lulled, in common with the rest of the system, into a passive state, may very readily and suddenly absorb the *inactive principle* from the like organ of the operator, upon the slightest opportunity being given, by such organ of the operator becoming excited in the least degree; which consequently must, in its turn, absorb the negative mesmeric or *active* principle.

I have witnessed several striking phenomena of this kind, and believe that they are not of very rare occurrence. One case in particular, in which *combativeness* in the subject's brain was *very large* and excitable; the like organ of the operator being large.

After the connexion had been formed and the absorption carried to considerable extent, and whilst the latter was still going on, the faculty of *combateness* of the operator became suddenly excited without any visible external cause, to such an extent, that it was with great difficulty he restrained himself from actually striking the subject. But upon raising himself, and looking leisurely into the subject's face with the involuntary feeling of a most bitter antagonist, and observing an unusual degree of placidity in his expression, he apprehended, at once, the cause of his excitement; readily perceiving that he had acquired it by local absorption. Upon this he endeavored to relax that feeling and become calm; the consequence of which was a *re-action* of the negative mesmerism upon the subject's combateness, which, by this re-absorption, became more and more *excited* as the operator grew *calm*.

Another instance I have seen, in which *tune* was strongly developed in the subject; with the operator the like organ was *full*. In this case the operator involuntarily commenced *humming a tune*; a thing entirely foreign to his usual habits, and especially on such an occasion: (he being at the time exhibiting phenomena to a public audience of several hundred persons in Reading, Pa.) I have seen this latter phenomenon at different times, both during and after the *operation*, and account for it as in the former case. Hence it will be seen, that, *during the operation*, the faculties do *not* act in unison. When the operation is completed, and the subject reduced to a deep *state*, the operator, by decreasing the action of his nervous system, causes a suspension of the adverse action of the corresponding organs; but even then, by *re-absorption*, the negative mesmeric fluid that is re-absorbed by the subject, which constitutes a *vehicle* for the *thought* or *sensation*, takes its journey at the expense of the operator. In a word, it may be resolved into this, namely, that whilst the faculty of one is being supplied with the active principle, by local absorption, the corresponding one of the other is becoming exhausted.

CHAPTER VI.

I SHALL now proceed to consider briefly, that interesting and valuable branch of mesmerism which has recently received the titles of "Neurology," "Cephalogy," &c., but is more generally termed "*Phreno-magnetism*."

With regard to the manner in which this class of phenomena is produced, I shall have to disagree in part with both Dr. Collyer and his opponents; for he does not admit that the organs of the

brain are *ever* excited by *manipulation*; or, in other words, that the excitement of the organs is caused by a fluid communicated by the *fingers*, but that the faculty is excited by "*will*." Whilst some of his opponents contend, that they can always be excited by "*touch*;" which process they consider indispensable. This latter error is certainly much the greater, and seems to betray a paucity of experience in the examination of the subject; whilst the former, I admit, may, despite of much industrious application, for a long time baffle our efforts to detect it; owing to the many difficulties usually attending an impartial investigation of this matter.

There are three distinct methods by which this kind of phenomena is made manifest, which may either act separately or conjunctively. These are: first, *Manipulation*, second, *Local Absorption*, third, *Perception*. With regard to MANIPULATION, of which I have yet premised nothing, the fact will be readily understood, that the fingers, when vigorously extended, which erects the negative mesmeric (electric) points of the nervous fibres toward the extremities, become excellent absorbents for the collection of the *active* principle; and upon being relaxed, will suffer this principle to escape; re-absorbing in turn the positive mesmeric or *inactive* principle. This fact is strongly corroborated by the effect produced by pointing the *extended* fingers towards the eyes of the subject, and then relaxing them whilst in this position: to the consequence of which latter act, many an amateur mesmerizer can attest the surprising discomfiture that he has met with by performing it, either through ignorance or inadvertence. So in bringing the fingers in contact (proximity,) with an organ of the brain, if they are already sufficiently charged with the active principle, re-absorption may be brought about immediately upon their being relaxed, and the organ thus excited. This capacity of exciting the organs of the brain, by manipulation, is confined to the principle of *general* absorption, and can have place only in those cases in which the law of *equilibrium* predominates over the principle of *local absorption*: and there are many cases in which this principle of local absorption, i. e. the preference which each part has for the fluids of its corresponding part, is so tenacious that it entirely precludes the efficiency of manipulation in exciting the *organs*. And, in fact, I think the cases comparatively few, in which manipulation alone is sufficient to produce this effect. I am not ignorant of the precautions necessary to prove this opinion of manipulatory excitement, and have been favored with the most unimpeachable evidence of its validity in cases in which all the usual hindrances upon this point have been removed. In many cases, however, the influence of *manipulation* is available, when acting in adjunction with either of the other exciting methods; for it then often adds vigor to the excitement already begun.

When a particular organ is to be excited by the second method, LOCAL ABSORPTION, the corresponding organ of the operator's brain must first be excited—receiving its *active principle* partly by local and partly by general absorption: (which latter includes absorption from foreign parts of his own system, and the general reservoir,) which organ as it becomes relaxed will re-absorb the positive mesmerism from the like organ of the subject, which, in its turn, by dint of *local* re-absorption, will receive the negative mesmerism necessary to arouse it to action. I would have supposed that this sympathetic excitement could not have escaped the notice of any *practical* observer, as it is by no means of rare occurrence.

The third method, PERCEPTION, which is perhaps as useful, and more applicable than either of the preceding ones, consists simply in informing the subject which faculty the operator desires to become excited. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways; by *mental correspondence*,* by which the subject will *perceive* what is expected of him; by any external sign which may have been given him on a former occasion; by telling the subject plainly the operator's desire; or by any thing, whatever, being done which would indicate that desire to him.

In a case of this kind, the susceptibility of the particular organ which the subject *perceives* it to be the intention of the operator to excite, is aroused by his apprehension of the excitement which is about to take place; which causes it to collect the active principle by either local or general absorption, as the case may be.

The general tenor of this last method agrees, I think, with Dr. Collyer's views of the subject, given at his lectures in Philadelphia in the spring of 1843, and embraces what he means to imply by "WILL."

Any two, or all of these methods, may often be advantageously combined.

These phenomena may also sometimes be produced by a third person, or one put in communication with the subject as in the case of the external sympathies; (see chapter IV., of taste, &c.,) and as they resemble them in many respects, are likewise governed by the same general principles.

I deem it scarcely necessary to say more at present to prove my theory of ABSORPTION, which I think will be found intelligible to every person who is familiar with mesmeric phenomena, I may only add briefly, that in removing the influence from a subject, a complete mutual re-absorption between him and the operator takes place, either local or general, as the case may be—that where there is exhaustion, i. e. a loss of either the positive or negative principle, it is finally re-supplied by a gradual re-action from the general

* See Part II., Chapter 1.

reservoir. And in order that I may not swell this part of my work beyond its intended limits, I shall conclude it by a few concise remarks on MANIPULATION. I have already alluded several times to the efficiency of manipulations, and premised that the fingers are excellent conductors, consequently manipulations are often used with great advantage *during the operation*, both as general conductors and absorbents for collecting any truant particles of fluid which may have escaped the local absorption, and which might otherwise cause convulsions.

Rev. La Roy Sunderland seems to entertain such a high opinion of *manipulations in the operation*, that in No. 1, Vol. 2, of his "Magnet," a valuable monthly periodical on the subject of mesmerism, published in New York, he says that their use "will be found equally successful, and far better than the *old* process of *staring persons in the face*." By which delicate language, I presume he alludes to holding a connexion by having the eyes mutually fixed. With such an opinion I cannot agree; for the eyes are both excellent and very natural conductors, and in many cases, such a connexion is indispensable in mesmerizing a *new* subject. In many cases, too, in which children are to be operated upon, and when it is impossible to hold their attention in any other way, it must be admitted to the "sine qua non" of the process. It is entirely foreign from my present design, to write a dissertation on the *art* of mesmerizing, although I have at my command the most ample resources for such a purpose; still, whenever I meet with any thing under that head, the nature of which seems calculated to mislead, and rather to throw darkness than light upon the paths of investigation, I shall deem it my duty to correct it.

In conclusion. In using manipulations for removing the influence from a subject, the fingers are relaxed that they may re-absorb the positive mesmerism, and if "passes" are used they are generally made from the extremities toward the body, throwing, as it were, the negative mesmeric fluid upon the negative mesmeric points of the nervous fibres of the subject's system; (which usually extend toward the extremities,) which now being called into action, are erected, and consequently re-absorb the *active principle*.

PART II.

UNIVERSAL CONNEXION.

CHAPTER I.

MAN is *not* that INDEPENDENT, *thinking*, being, which, for many plausible reasons, he has long been, and still is generally supposed to be. I intend to reserve the general discussion of this subject, for a future and more proper occasion. In the mean time, however, I introduce the assertion, in this place, merely as a ground-work for a single position, that I am about to advance; namely, UNIVERSAL CONNEXION: i. e. *a general connexion of thought throughout the universe*. This position will, doubtless, seem extremely novel at first, and to many, eccentric and absurd; yet I shall not, on this account, hesitate to advance it, for it is both radical, and demonstrable; nor do I despair of being able clearly to prove and support it, by bringing forward a succession of illustrations, the evidence of which, cannot for a moment be doubted.

In the first place, the mesmeric fluid, of which I have already given some description, has for its basis the electric fluid, (which is universal,) which fact alone pre-suppose a universal connexion; and was this fluid identical with the mesmeric fluid, doubtless the connexion would be much more complete than it now is; as it is, however, the basis being modified by the human system, the strength, or weakness of the connexion (as with mesmeric experiments) depends greatly upon the proximity, or distance, to which the connexion is carried.*

* In speaking, in a former chapter, of persons being mesmerized at the distance of half a mile, I do not mean to imply, that a connexion cannot be held at that distance; nor do I deny the possibility, in some cases, of performing the operation at that distance; although there are many intervening circumstances that may interfere with the genuineness of such an experiment. Nor would I be understood to imply, that *action of the nervous system* does not embrace that mental action, which mesmerizers misname "*will*." But it is the absurdity of making such assertions in public, without their proper reasonings, to which I chiefly object; for rational people will not believe such statements, without, at least, a plausible explanation of them; and consequently, they are worse than thrown away.

Secondly. The basis, (electricity,) may at any time form a vehicle, or rather a medium, for the modifying principles of the mesmeric fluid.

Thirdly. The manner of producing many mesmeric mental phenomena, is *but an extension of our usual means of performing mental actions.*

“The possibility of mental transfer has been established beyond the remotest chance of a doubt.”

There can no longer be any doubt of the truth of the above quotation. Every mesmeric practitioner must be familiar with the fact, that a state of *mental correspondence* may often be produced.

In producing the almost startling class of phenomena exhibited by this state, it is necessary, that the subject should receive, by local absorption, the mental impression from the brain of the operator, or person in communication with him.

In order that the uninitiated may not be at a loss to know to what class of phenomena I have reference, I will insert the following extract from an article in the “*LEHIGH BULLETIN*,” of August 16, 1843:

“On Tuesday evening, of last week, after going through a successful course of clairvoyant,* and phreno-magnetic experiments, Dr. Yorke announced his intention of exhibiting on Thursday evening, an experiment with a bowl of molasses, by means of which, he would *reflect † the rays of an embodied idea*, from the

* These experiments, though called clairvoyant, were *mental correspondent*, exhibited in the ordinary manner.—THE AUTHOR.

† Dr. Collyer first introduced this experiment before the public, in the Spring of 1843, and since advocated it in his pamphlet, entitled, “*Psychography*,” on which occasions, he explained it as the “*reflection*” of the rays of an embodied idea, from the surface of the liquid. It was having witnessed his experiments, that induced me to make the trial, on the present, as well as on several other occasions, with equal success; and for some time, I felt quite enthusiastic about it. Since, however, I have discovered the error into which I was unwittingly led; therefore I correct it.

After much anxious investigation to discover the truth of the hypothesis, I was compelled to relinquish my purpose. My subjects told me, upon inquiry, that, in many cases, when performing this experiment, the images seemed to rise out of the liquid; whilst in others, the images appeared of their natural size, and entirely independent of the *mirror*. They told me too, that, in those cases in which the images seemed to rest upon the *mirror*, that appearance was caused by the persons in communication with them, holding upon their mental vision, the *image of the mirror*, in connexion with the image of the object desired to be seen; or by their own, (the subjects’) knowledge of the presence of the mirror: and, consequently, their connecting its image with the image presented by local absorption. Which explanations I consider very rational.

I also found that the same results took place, when the angles on the opposite sides of the *mirror* were unequal, as when equal. And, in fact, I found no change when I, (privately) removed the liquid altogether; for even then, by dint of the supposed presence of the *mirror*, the images were often seen, as before, *resting upon the surface of the liquid*.

Again: if the rays of this medium were actually bent in a similar manner to

brain of one person, looking into the bowl at a certain angle, to that of the recipient, at the same angle, on the opposite side. The announcement was, of course, received with much incredulity; and even his most sanguine friends were disposed to smile at what they considered his enthusiasm. But Thursday evening came, and, after a few appropriate remarks, Dr. Y. threw a young man, of this place, into a magnetic sleep, in about fifteen minutes; a table was then stood before him, upon which Dr. Y. placed a small bowl of molasses; a medical gentleman, from the audience, then took a seat on the opposite side of the table, and was requested to look into the bowl, and bring before his mind, any image which he choose. The recipient seemed intensely searching for something in the liquid; and, after a few moments, said, in a distinct and audible manner, 'I see the State House, at Philadelphia.' A short pause; when he added—'I see a wagon.' At this, the gentleman stated that he had described the images of his thoughts to the very letter; and that the 'wagon' was the one well-known as the 'Black Maria,' used to convey the prisoners. The result of this experiment was heard in profound silence by the audience, and so great was the sensation produced, that actual stupor and doubt seemed depicted on nearly every countenance. A clergyman then took the seat; and, after a minute of breathless suspense, the recipient said, 'I see an engine house with white doors'—a momentary pause—'now I see a church'—pause—'they have brought the engine out, and stood it before the door'—short pause—'and now they seem to be drawing it through a large body of people.' At this moment, an involuntary exclamation of surprise escaped from the lips of the experimenter; which was followed by a burst of astonishment from the audience, as the flash of conviction fell upon their minds, whilst he described the scenery which had passed through his mind, corresponding with what the recipient had said, in every particular.

We saw Dr. Y. repeat this experiment on Saturday evening; when, among others, a gentleman entirely skeptical took the seat, and brought before his mind, the falls of Niagara; the recipient, after a moment's pause, and with some degree of apparent sur-

those of reflected light, as Dr. Collyer supposes, the images would be seen, by the subject, in an inverted position; which is not the case. He also, in his "Psychography," where he maintains the necessity of the angles, on either side, being equal, introduces, as a parallel case, the phenomenon of the Egyptian Magi, with the "MAGIC MIRROR." But in the accounts which he there furnishes of the manner in which they perform this experiment, there is nothing, whatever, adduced to show that an equality of the *angles* was observed; which, had it been done, could not have escaped the notice of the inquiring parties engaged in it.—Hence I shall consider the phenomenon in question, as a result of simple local absorption, without the necessity of *bending* the rays of the fluid. Though I am still perfectly willing to alter my opinion, whenever sufficient evidence shall be produced, to warrant me in doing so.

prise, cried out, 'Is it a dam?' The gentleman seemed to change his opinion.

Another striking demonstration of mental correspondence which Dr. Y. gave, was this: One of the audience placed a row of six or seven pieces of money before the recipient; Dr. Y. then told him to gather them up, one at a time, until the person who stood behind him *willed* him to stop. He commenced picking them up; and, at the *will* of the person near him, *promptly stopped*; it was requested to be repeated; Dr. Y. consented; and the same result took place, to the astonishment of the whole audience. The experiment was then tested by about twenty ladies and gentlemen, without a single failure."

I might adduce many other equally striking and successful experiments, which have come under my immediate observation and practice; but as that would not forward the chief design of this part of my work, (believing that the above-mentioned will suffice to point out the particular kind of phenomena of which I am now treating,) I shall not occupy the attention of the reader with them. It will be seen, as I have already hinted, that, by local absorption, i. e. by the *active principle* being conveyed from the brain of one person, to that of another, correct mental impressions may be transferred. These impressions too, as every practitioner knows, are often transferred to the lucid subject undesignedly; and to a considerable distance.

The degree of accuracy, with which an *individual idea* is thus transferred, depends upon the degree of the natural capacity of the parties to be in *communication*; the *distance* between them, (on which, as I said before, depends the strength of the connexion,) and the degree of *concentration* upon that particular idea. I have already premised that this mesmeric communication is *but a heightened degree of our natural* means of communication*; hence it is governed by the same general laws, and a reduction of the accuracy of that communication, brings it more and more in proximity with our usual mode of communication; until, finally, it commingles with it, and they are lost in each other.

According to the above, the universal basis of the mesmeric fluid, forms a medium for connecting, in a greater or less degree, the *minds*, the *thoughts*, the IMMATERIAL parts of all mankind.

This connexion is manifested in a variety of ways; not only in the mesmeric condition, but also in many cases of nervous disease, and in the normal state.

I have already shown some instances of *mesmeric* connexion; I will adduce one instance more, which bears a greater proximity to *natural* connexion. Having repeatedly mesmerised Master George

* I use this word, merely in contradistinction to *mesmeric*, to imply that there has been no *voluntary effort* to increase the strength of the connexion.

Wunderlich, a lad eighteen or nineteen years old, at Allentown, Pa., I took, what I then considered, my final departure from that place, for Reading, distant thirty-six miles; whence, after remaining upwards of two weeks, I unexpectedly returned to Allentown, being very anxious to find George, for the purpose of testing some mesmeric experiments. On my arrival, I was not a little surprised to learn that George had *anticipated* my coming; and with such certainty, that he could not rest until he had satisfied himself of the fact, by inquiring for me. He said that he "KNEW" that I was coming; but *how* he knew, he was unable to tell; but added, at the same time, "Is it possible that you have such a powerful influence over me?"

ELUCIDATION. There was a strong natural connexion between the fluids of our systems; which had been rendered stronger, by our former mesmeric communion. By our proximity, and the extreme activity of my mind, from anxiety to find him; and that activity too, being strongly concentrated upon *him, as it had often been before*, my brain was rendered particularly susceptible to that *same modification* of the active principle, which had supplied it, on many former occasions, when its action was concentrated upon the same object. At our greatest proximity, which was a little less than a quarter of a mile, (my lodging being that distance from where he was at the time,) there being, as I have intimated, a strong *connexion*, my system, (the electric fluid being the medium,) absorbed from his the active principle. This condition alone, might have caused such feelings to him, as he had often before felt in my presence; and thus reminded him of me. This feeling, however, being aroused on his part, may have caused a *re-absorption* from my system; and thus fully corroborated his first impression.

In disease, this phenomenon is often strikingly manifested. I visited an old lady, last summer, in Northampton County, Pa., who had been blind for several years. This remarkable personage is constantly in a state of semi-mental lucidity. After conversing for half an hour, I discovered that she was taking cognizance of my thoughts, by *absorption*, in a very accurate manner. This lady almost invariably anticipates the (irregular) visits of her physician and friends, within a few minutes.

In seeking in the normal state, for a parallel to the above, I will simply point the reader to the vulgar phrase, "*Speak of the Devil, and he will appear.*" It is a remarkable and well-established fact that persons *do* make their appearance in company, whilst being spoken of, or thought of, much oftener than for which the rules of chance will account; hence it is that the above phrase has been repeatedly heard by nearly every one. The proper reading, however, is, *When an acquaintance approaches, he is spoken of.*

This remarkable mental phenomenon, like every thing else that

savours of the wonderful, has oftener elicited momentary surprise, than philosophic enquiry. I think that the same principles of connexion, and absorption, which I adduced in the former cases, will satisfactorily explain it. Deeming these instances sufficient of their kind, to give the reader some idea of what I mean by *universal connexion*, which *cannot* be doubted in the *mesmeric* state, I shall proceed to draw still closer analogies between this, and the normal state.

CHAPTER II.

Who does not know that we can convey our ideas to some persons, with much greater facility, than to others? And who does not know, too, that we can better convey them to those with whom we are familiar, than to strangers? Why is it so? becomes a matter of rational enquiry.

One obvious reason why we can better communicate to some than others, is, that the *connexion* is naturally stronger—that the capacity to be in *correspondence* is greater. For, although in conversation, our *words*, (as such,) may be as intelligible to one, as another, the fact that the fluids of our systems, do not so readily commingle in some cases, as in others, is sufficient to create a vast difference in the efficacy with which we are capable of rendering our ideas comprehensible.

That it is not the *sound of words alone*, which conveys an idea to the mind, is evident; notwithstanding that we may be quite familiar with those sounds; hence it is, that, when one's mind is already engaged, he may be addressed with the most distinct words, the sound of which, the ear *cannot* exclude, yet they will not convey the intended impression to the mind. To make him understand the meaning of the sounds, we must have his *attention*, i. e. his *susceptibility* must be excited, which will render him capable of absorbing from our systems, the principle necessary to complete the idea which the signs of sound may have caused his excited susceptibility to anticipate.

This ability to *yield the attention*, or to become in correspondence, differs in different individuals, as I have already hinted; and upon this depends, in part, the greater facility with which we can convey our ideas to some persons than to others. I shall be told, that the ability to give the attention to the speaker, depends upon some peculiarities of temperament—certain conditions of phrenological developement—a general capacity to concentrate the mind, &c. I admit that it does; and, in return, reply, that upon these very same conditions, depends, in a great degree, the

capacity to conduct, successfully, the phenomena of mesmeric mental correspondence.

Doubtless, some reader has, by this time, enquired, how we are to account for the capacity to convey ideas by means of writing, &c., and how it is that we are capable of receiving mental impressions, from books, which, being inanimate, could not possibly supply the necessary fluid, for the confirming of an idea?

In cases of this kind, the susceptibility is excited by certain *forms* (of words;) which the mind recognizes as having before seen; i. e. these certain forms comport with impressions which have formerly been deposited upon the brain, which impressions, consist of a fluid under such peculiar modifications as to be recognized by the mind, to contain some particular meaning, as I have stated in a former chapter; and which, when excited, may be combined in such a manner as will produce the necessary *susceptibility* of the author's meaning; which excited susceptibility, may be confirmed simply by the reader's absorbing the active basis, either from foreign parts of his own system, or the general reservoir.

No sign of form, however, which the author may make, although he may attach to it the most important meaning, will convey the intended idea to the mind of the reader; unless it comports with some mental impression already resident upon the brain; which impression was created on some former occasion, by joining a particular meaning to a similar sign; and which now may serve to connect this external sign with a similar meaning. Finally: *this* method of communication is weaker and less accurate than that of *personal* correspondence; for it loses the great advantage of local absorption, and the advantage of communion by the eyes, which are unrivalled conductors of the fluid; which renders them, as it were, the "index to the soul."

Who does not know, that, when persons wish to interchange their ideas, they get as close together as convenient? Who ever saw two persons conversing with their backs towards each other, or with their eyes shut, for the purpose of facilitating their correspondence? I think no one.

I have not written this last section so much to strengthen my present position of universal connexion, as to avoid the appearance of inconsistency; and to furnish an excellent analogy to a part of mesmerism, which has not yet received its due share of attention. It is this: that some subjects have the capacity of going into the mesmeric state, from *sheer belief that the mesmerizer is operating upon them.*

ELUCIDATION. The susceptibility of the subject is excited by his anticipating the result, in a similar manner to that in which it had been excited on a previous occasion, when in presence of the mesmerizer; which renders him susceptible to the *same* result.—And, though it may be urged that he absorbs the principle for

confirming his anticipation, from his mesmerizer, with whom he may be in communication, it seems reasonable to suppose that a great part of the confirming principle is absorbed from the general reservoir; which confirming principles, however, is often modified by his susceptibility, in such a manner as will place him in communication with no one, save the person whom he supposed to be mesmerizing him.

Again; we can better communicate with those whom we know, than with strangers; because the connexion of the fluids of our nervous systems has been rendered stronger by dint of repeated approximation, correspondence, &c. The strength of this connexion is augmented by long-continued and frequent correspondence; and is weakened by distance, and the length of time which that distance may be continued. In a word, this condition is governed by the common laws of *connexion and absorption*.

Besides what has already been advanced in favor of *universal connexion*, it only remains for me to refer the reader to the manifestations of this law, in its powerful effects upon tribes, communities, neighborhoods, and nations, to satisfy him entirely of its validity.

Why do the different members of a tribe possess the same general character—the same ideas of God and eternity—the same measure of justice, &c., with each other? Because of the general commingling of the mesmeric fluid of their systems, by the laws of mutual absorption—of action and re-action—of equilibrium, &c. It has been disputed (upon what ground I know not) that a “general idea” ever existed. In my opinion, general ideas are not at all unusual. For instance: neighborhoods and communities entertain the same general idea of right and wrong—the same general regard for the wonderful—the same disposition towards hospitality, &c. I know that *imitativeness* may have its especial weight in some of these things; it may teach men to construct the same kind of dwellings—to adopt similar forms and customs in living; but it will never teach them to *think alike*—it will never excite them to mutual enthusiasm upon a particular doctrine of religion (numerous, and startling instances of which, every reader must have before his mind,) no; it requires a more potent law of nature, to accomplish these purposes; that which spreads the *medium of thought* throughout the habitable globe, and forms a *universal connexion between all mankind!* In extended nations too, this principle is still manifest; though diminishing in strength as it extends; according to the distance to which it is carried, &c. I might adduce many other evidences of equal weight with these that I have briefly given; but, thinking that I have already said enough to illustrate the point in question, I shall reserve the more elaborate discussion of it for a future occasion.

In conclusion, I can see nothing particularly eccentric in the opinion that there exists a *universal medium of thought*, which

may be capable of conveying any modification, from the human system, that may be consigned to it; especially when I reflect that there *does* exist a certain *universal medium* which is capable of conveying modifications in the form of epidemic diseases, &c., a striking instance of which, we have in the Asiatic Cholera; which spread its invincible terrors throughout the earth!

CHAPTER III.

CLAIRVOYANCE, or the ability to see through substances which are opaque with respect to common light, is one of the most difficult conditions which mesmerism now aims to produce. I have premised an explanation of this phenomenon in the commencement of this work.

By this faculty, the subject is enabled to see through space, and substance, having the universal connecting principle for the medium of his mental vision, to an immense distance; when he *actually sees* objects as they exist, without being informed of their condition in any other manner. And, as his mental vision is not restrained by any external apparatus, as is the natural vision, he has no difficulty on this account, in discerning small objects at a distance, with the same facility, as large ones. I suppose, in some instances, however, when a subject gives an account of what is passing at a distance, that he establishes a communication with some individual who is present at the scene which he is contemplating; and thus, although at considerable distance from that individual, gains his information from him, by local absorption. This, however, is very difficult to determine.

This state of mental lucidity too, has also been manifested without the aid of mesmerism, as in the cases of *young Yarnell*, (the Frankford boy) Emanuel Sweedenborge, and some others.

PART III.

CONSEQUENCES OF MESMERISM.

CHAPTER I.

The general adoption of mesmerism into any community, must be attended with the most important results. At present, however, the subject is enveloped in such mystery, and the usual explanations of its phenomena savour so much of the magic, and astounding, that the attention of the mass is attracted more by its novelty than its usefulness—more through a desire to be astonished, than to be enlightened. Oftentimes too, its phenomena are so startling and unaccountable, as to cause even those who have produced them, to doubt the evidence of their own senses. This state of things is calculated to give rise to ample scope for the propagation of quackery. For, whilst those of the multitude persist in grasping at what they consider the ridiculous, the absurd, rather than the plain and intelligible, whilst they evince a sickly desire to be deceived, rather than fail in their attempt to be astonished, there will always be found those who are prepared to cram their gaping mouths with that too palatable nostrum—vulgarly termed “humbug.” And until the subject takes a more scientific turn than it has heretofore enjoyed, these evils are destined to continue and increase.

Owing, too, to the great ignorance which is prevalent upon the subject, joined to this love of the wonderful, many radical, and oftentimes hazardous errors will continually be committed; and ignorant operators will often become dupes to their own folly.

In almost every branch of mesmerism, many *false* impressions may be made upon the subject; (i. e. such impressions as are made by causes which escape the detection of the unwary operator,) which produce *delusive phenomena*—in appearance, so much like genuine ones, that it is often a matter of great delicacy to separate the two classes. For instance, in endeavoring to produce clairvoyant results, much care is necessary to be taken, lest the subject be influenced by the minds of those around him; as in mental cor-

respondence, which would totally destroy the genuineness of the result. I have often met with this kind of confusion, and where it is not sufficiently guarded against in cases of the examination of internal diseases, the most dangerous consequences may ensue. I have seen dupes, too, to this error, where I thought that I had least reason to look for them—even among those who had gained some notoriety as mesmerizers, I have found cases in which they considered the statements of one recipient, upon a particular subject, greatly corroborated by the corresponding statements of several other recipients, when it must have been evident beyond a doubt, to any one acquainted with the subject, that there were *false impressions* produced by local absorption, i. e. mental correspondence between the operator and recipient. Such apparent errors, whether committed through ignorance, or for the purpose of deceiving, often form the connecting link between the sublime and ridiculous, and furnish our *opponents* with abundant material for raillery.

Indeed, owing to the rare satisfactory production of the clairvoyant state, many of our modern mesmerizers, who have not been able to produce it, doubt the existence of it altogether; I for some time, did the same, but since I have given the subject a careful examination, I no longer hesitate to yield it my support.

On the other hand, a few modern operators claim for mesmerism, a condition of *prophetic vision*. I have met with several remarkable, and *seemingly* unaccountable phenomena of this kind; which I forbear inserting, because I have not yet adopted the hypothesis, yet I am far from being prepared to reject it. This, indeed, would seem like crossing the threshold of the spiritual world, and would throw consternation upon many who should consider it an ungodly attempt to elevate man beyond his proper sphere. I would, however, calm the fears of such, as well as allay any expectation that may be abroad, of a general participation in this novel branch of ontology, with the words of Rev. Mr. Townshend, who says, "In being permitted to view the mesmeric state, there is nothing to make man proud; but all to make him humble. Then too, mesmerism has its restrictions which keep it low to earth; even while it hints to heaven. Many are the conditions required for its accomplishment. Carefully hedged about, is it, by the barriers of opposing will; by defective sensibility; even by a spirit of skepticism. Its highest capacities are exercised with difficulty—its loftiest wonders are few and fleeting."

CHAPTER II.

The chief advantage that we have thus far gained from mesmerism, is its HEALING virtues ; which cannot be too highly esteemed. As a remedial agent, it is the most natural, and most effectual means with which nature's God has endowed us. It has already severed the compact long established between death and several formidable diseases ; and is the most potent antagonist with which that last visitant of mortals has to contend. When *judiciously* applied, it has often been found successful in the cure of Nervous Headache, Chronic Pains, that excruciating malady the Toothache, Convulsions, Locked-Jaw, St. Vitus Dance, Tic Douloureux, Catalepsy, Spinal Disease, Blindness, and many other maladies that "flesh is heir to."

Its usefulness in producing insensibility of the system in cases of surgical operations, is incalculable. Yet many of our Medical Institutions deny the reality of mesmerism altogether, and, regarding it as a species of chicanery, have closed, and barred, and *sealed* their doors against it ; so that they will neither admit it, nor are they likely to discern from their isolated *stronghold*, "what manner of thing" it is, that they have thus excluded. A remarkable instance of this character recently occurred in ——— on occasion of a report being read, of a case of the amputation of a limb, without causing pain, whilst the patient was under mesmeric influence. But I need not now record the inconsistent, I might justly say, the contemptible conduct, of some of the members of ——— upon this occasion, as it must be remembered by all, to have been totally unworthy of such men ; and must long remain a stigma on their philosophic pretensions, whilst it will stand as a sturdy column of patience, in the annals of mesmerism.

Much stress has been placed on the assertion "that, if mesmerism really possesses the dignity that it claims, it would have been brought to light by the regularly bred man of science ; and not have been left to the investigation of a few obscure individuals." But have we not *regularly bred* men of science engaged in its advocacy ? What are Dr. Eliottson and Dr. Collyer ? What are the hosts of German and French Professors ? It is true that some other intelligent and benevolent persons have entered the field as mesmerizers, and efficient ones too. I shall not, however, essay to palliate the gross inconsistency of *some* not being learned men ; for I esteem truth equally pure, beautiful, and valuable, whether it flows through the channel of the unsophisticated, unbiassed reason of Nature's favored pupil, or the hedged intellect of him, who, reared within the precincts of the nursery's walls, has been taught

by his college axioms, to revere with sacred awe, the preconceptions of his respective preceptor. And in fact, I begin to fear that if our Medical Schools still persist with their blindness, in excluding a knowledge of the very fundamental laws of the human economy from their *regular* course of instruction, the time is not far off, when their diplomas will be regarded as but a pitiful testimony of medical knowledge.

Did my limits permit, I might name many benevolent and persevering mesmerizers, in this country and in Europe, who have successively applied mesmerism as a medical agent—who have eradicated several diseases between which and death, scarcely a shadow was discernable—who have repelled some of the most loathsome, and ugliest enemies to health, that venture to assail our species; and who have reared monuments to the triumph of mesmerism, which the indifference, the bigotry, and the prejudice of ten thousand medical institutions cannot overthrow; as it is, I may not, nor have I room to give the particulars of but few of the many cases with which I have met, of the successful application of this agent as a therapeutical. Dr. Collyer relates a case in which a person apparently dead, and whose coffin had already been procured, was resuscitated by its application; and I cannot too forcibly impress its importance in this capacity, upon the mind of every philanthropist. Undoubtedly, many persons are supposed dead, long before they really are so; and as long as a single spark of *vitality* remains upon the system, especially if the system has been formerly rendered susceptible to the mesmeric influence, a mesmeric communication may be established, by which a departing spirit might often be recalled to inhabit for a while longer, its earthly home.

It is worthy of remark in this place, that in an attempt to introduce any new remedy into medical practice, the innovator is required in the outset, to perform cures in the most hopeless cases that can be found; which have baffled the efficacy of every established mode of practice. He must perform miracles, and repeat them, under every possible disadvantage; and, this too, in the very infancy of his art, before he is able to bring his remedy into notice. This is emphatically the case with respect to mesmerism, which is not only capable of curing diseases which all other known remedies have failed to cure; but, when *judiciously* applied, is a very pleasant, prompt, and safe cure for many others which are often successfully treated by the usual modes of practice. In short, its influence imparts general vigor to the declining system; and in cases in which only a part of the system is affected, and the system generally is brought under mesmeric influence, the affected part will, by a natural right and capacity, absorb to itself, the healthy fluid which its convalescence requires, according to that valuable law of equilibrium, before alluded to.

Upon the healthy system, too, its *judicious* application may be repeated day after day, without any disadvantageous results.

Besides this, the healing virtues of mesmerism aspire to purposes of a far more exalted character; they purpose to heal diseases of the *mind*—to restore to health the *wandering intellect*—to bring back *departed reason*—to assuage the *mental woes* of afflicted man, with a power and precision, at which no other remedy ever yet aimed. Repeated cases of both total and partial insanity, have been cured by them. A variety of the most important and thrilling mental phenomena that can be imagined, have come within the scope of my immediate practice. For an example; I will insert the following brief notice of an interesting case. From the *Reading Gazette*, Nov. 18, 1843:—

“I first saw Miss H——, of Reading, Pa., (the subject of the above mentioned operation,) at a public lecture which I gave at that place Nov. 13th, 1843. On this occasion she was led forward to the platform in company with another, desiring to be mesmerized. I observed at the time, a peculiar reservedness in her manner, for which I did not then attempt to account; yet I have since attributed it to the real state of her mind. Amid the very limited opportunity of learning the character of a subject, and the usual restlessness and enthusiasm exhibited at such public lectures, in this country, I seated the above mentioned young lady. But, after exciting her susceptibility, and commencing the absorption, I was led, by observing the eccentric progress of the operation, to apprehend some unusual phenomenon: which prompted me to desist from throwing her into the *state*, before the audience. I therefore, removed the influence, and concluded my lecture with some other experiments; immediately after which, feeling interested in the case of Miss H., I obtained a private introduction to her, and during the same evening, performed the operation alluded to by Mr. Miller.

Instead of an elaborate history of this case, suffice it to be said, that Miss H. had given her affections to a certain gentleman, Mr. T——, of R——, which had been but illy requited by him. This, her reason was unable to support—she became broken hearted—in a word, a monomaniac. In a fit of calmness, however, when reason presided over the passions, when self control held the sway over the more tender feelings, she resolved, through the agency of mesmerism, to banish from her mind, all remembrance of the joyless past.

When I took her out of the *state*, she was a *different being*! Instead of that wan, dejected look, which, but a few minutes before had marked her features, and beneath which reason itself seemed to reel, there now beamed from her cheerful countenance, all that sprightly joyousness so characteristic of health, youth, and innocence; not even a vestage of her former sadness remained; he who had harrassed her mind, found no longer a place in her affec-

tions; when his name was mentioned, she denied having ever heard it before—when the circumstances were alluded to, she did not recognize them. The facts seemed to have vanished from her mind, as though they had never existed.

In reply to my questions, she said that she had forgotten nothing, but that a great weight had been removed from her mind, and that she felt unusually and unaccountably happy. Some days after this, she was intentionally brought face to face with him she had once known and loved; and it was a moment of the most thrilling interest to her skeptical friends, who were acquainted with the facts, when they observed the modest, unchanging expression of her features, as she said "*she had not before met him.*"

This state of things continued for two weeks. In the mean time some notice of the facts had been taken by the public prints, which gave rise to circumstances that rendered it necessary to procure a greater amount of evidence than was then extant, to prove that the lady had ever made the statement to her friend, concerning Mr. T.

In the condition of affairs I was again called: I stated to Miss H., that to prevent her friends becoming involved in serious difficulties, she must be mesmerized, and throw herself upon our generosity for a few minutes.

Without comprehending what was to be done, she consented; I mesmerized her, and desiring her to *recall* all the circumstances which I had formerly caused her to forget, took her out of the *state*, when she raised her eyes, and immediately burst into a flood of tears. Here again I recognized the features of her who had been led forward at my lecture. I shall not attempt to delineate the feelings of any one present; words cannot convey an idea of the anguish depicted in that appealing look of despair.—All her former grief had returned, and with it, a remembrance of all the particulars concerning him she had loved.

She at first, refused to answer any questions concerning him; but, after telling her the necessity of the tale being re-told, and that she should in a few minutes forget all again, she recited, as calmly as possible, the particulars of the source of her woes: when, having obtained the necessary evidence, I again closed the scene, and in a few minutes more re-awoke her to the enjoyment of cheerfulness, health, and happiness. The statement which she had just given, corresponded exactly with that given to her friend just two weeks before.

ELUCIDATION. The *impressions* made upon the brain, by the painful circumstances in question, had become diseased by the continued increase of the active principle upon them; which rendered them peculiarly susceptible to the re-action of the inactive principle. By an *effort*, the subject allayed the excitement of the *impressions*: thus causing the parts containing them, to absorb an

abundance of positive mesmerism, which displaced the active principle, and rendered the impressions too faint to be recognized by the mind, when in the normal state.

This power to allay the excitement of a mental impression, is not peculiar to the mesmeric state; it is but an extension of the same capacity which many of us can exercise in a low degree, whilst in the normal state.*

Several months after the above had occurred, and a short time previous to this work going to press, I addressed a letter to Mr. Miller, wishing to know the final termination of this case. The following is a copy of his letter in reply.

Reading, April 7th, 1844.

DR. A. YORKE.

Sir.—I have received yours of the 1st inst., asking information concerning the case of Miss H——, and as you desire that I shall be careful that the evidence be accurate and impartial, I shall say nothing for which I cannot vouch.

About one month after your departure from Reading, Mr. T——, the young man who she said caused the trouble, was taken to the house of Miss H——, and asked her “do you know me?” she replied “yes;” but denied the circumstances. The next day, my wife, in my presence, went into a detail of every thing which she had said concerning the transaction, and of what had been done for her relief. It appeared to me, that during the recital a light was dawning upon her mind, when finished, she declared it was all true, and that she remembered it distinctly. Yet I could detect no appearance of grief or sorrow, neither at that time, or since. She now associates with Mr. T——, but appears to consider him as an acquaintance only.

I am very respectfully yours,

W. R. MILLER.

By this letter it is shown that a knowledge of the forgotten circumstances has been recalled; this, however, for a long time withstood the daily efforts of her acquaintances, who, as they could not believe the existence of the phenomenon, used every means in their power, to bring back to her mind, the forgotten facts. The value of the operation, however, has not been lessened in the slightest degree by this termination; for the remembrance of the facts has returned—*stripped of all its grief and sorrow, a knowledge* of the facts has been restored to her *perceptive* faculties; but the *exiled woes* that formerly attended them, will never return to their native home—the *propensities*.

*See the conclusion of this chapter for an elucidation of the recalling of the facts which had been forgotten.

It will be said, that time would have had the same effect in removing the grief from the mind of Miss H——. So it might : but it would have exhausted and impaired her system, to have waited for the cure of that tardy physician.—And this is what I have prevented by mesmerism.

Finally. View this *mesmeric* phenomena in every particular—trace it carefully down through all its various stages, until it is lost in the *normal* state ; and it will greatly corroborate my position respecting the homogeneousness of the phenomena of two conditions.

The use of mesmerism in educating, too, is invaluable ; and in this, it is, that the value of the capacity to excite the different faculties of the mind is chiefly manifested. The *moral* faculties of the subject may be stimulated to increased action ; whilst the *animal* propensities, where their action is too strong, may be subdued.—The *perceptive* and *reflective* faculties may be rendered more active : which will add strength to the powers of memory and reason. In fact, the whole *man* may be renovated. All the finer qualities of the mind may be made to display their greatness ; whilst the courser ones are made subservient to them. Facts, too, the particulars of which had been forgotten years before, which it had baffled every ordinary effort of the mind to recall, have, through this agency, been brought back to the knowledge of the subject, with every circumstance connected with them, as distinctly delineated, as though they had occurred within the last hour.

ELUCIDATION. The knowledge thus recalled, although it had been dormant in the memory for years, had never yet gone out of it ; i. e. the impressions made upon the brain by the deposits of *fluid*, modified by the external causes of sensation, which were present years before, had never yet been entirely erased, although the lapse of time, by dint of the law of *equilibrium*, might have rendered them very faint. These faint impressions are now aroused by concentrating the whole attention upon them, using contagious impressions (as in cases of ordinary recollection,) to point them out : the effect of this, is to excite the susceptibility of the parts of the system containing the impressions in question ; thus causing them to absorb from the general reservoir, the active principle necessary for the confirmation of the impressions.

It will be seen that there is nothing here proposed, but what has already been premised, namely : an extension of our *natural* mental capacities. In this case, an increase of the power of *recollection*.

The above faint outline of an explanation, which has been given that I may not subject myself to the same charge of inconsistency that I have brought against others, in the forepart of this work, for leaving their assertions in too crude a state to merit belief, embraces a portion of my theory of memory, at which I have already hinted several times, namely : That each external cause of sensa-

tion produces a peculiar modification of the mesmeric fluid, which is then deposited upon an appropriate part of the nervous system, where its peculiar import is recognized by the mind. That the strength of this peculiar modification, depends upon the degree of concentration, with which it is made, the qualities and the quantity of the confirming principle, the length of time that its action is continued, the lapse of time from the cessation of its action until it is again called forth, &c. And that an external cause of sensation, bearing a relation to that which formerly produced the resident modification, is capable of producing a modification, which, by its congeniality will commingle with the former dormant modification, and excite its susceptibility to a re-supply of the confirming principle, and thus re-produce the original mental impression. But I have rather digressed from my subject; I shall now return to it, leaving the special consideration of memory, for a future occasion.

CHAPTER III.

The great, benevolent, and legitimate design of clairvoyance, seems to be the examination of internal diseases.

By this capacity, a lucid subject will often point out the diseased parts of the system, either of himself or of another, with the greatest accuracy. This, however, I am inclined to think, is often done by a peculiar modification of clairvoyance; which enables the subject to see with greater facility, on account of his close communication with the patient, than he otherwise could do. (This purpose, too, is often effected without the necessity of clairvoyance. I think that it may also be practically applied to other *benevolent* purposes.

This necessity for *benevolence*, in true lucid mesmeric phenomena, is a sad poser to many of our mercenary would-be-skeptics. It is the part of mesmerism, which above all others, they are least willing should be true! If, says one, you can prove the truth of clairvoyance, under any circumstances whatsoever, I shall be sure to double my wealth next year, by digging up hidden treasures &c. In fact some such mercenary attempts have already been made, the results of which I need not mention; as the mesmeric *vis operandi* requires an exercise of *benevolence*; and certainly there is nothing particularly benevolent in the proposition of our opponent, who, when he finds his anticipations foiled by the very spirit of the subject, sneers at what he tries to consider a happy hit on the part of mesmerism, to avoid scrutiny.

We want more *benevolence* in the world : or rather, we want a greater exercise of that faculty than we now have. And until men cease to pervert their noble mental endowments, until they become convinced that "the love of money is the root of all evil," the most lamentable evidence of which has been developed in every age of the world, mesmerism can never, and will never become a subject of general use and application.

Each one of ninety-nine persons, out of every hundred with whom we meet, (in this country at least,) is eagerly striving to swallow up the substance of the remaining ninety-eight—a thing in itself, morally impossible, the whole soul seems absorbed in the one ideal, the greatest of all possible follies—an attempt to get rich, a thing in which no sane man ever yet succeeded.

Every efficient mesmerizer, I think, can attest to the justice of my remarks upon the high office which the benevolent feelings perform in the *vis operandi*. We know that when we are suddenly called upon to throw a patient into the mesmeric state, who is suffering in any way, and our sympathies are excited by his condition, (making every allowance for his susceptibility,) we are capable of exercising a degree of power, to which we are entire strangers, when operating merely for the sake of experiment. In the former case, we find our subject passing into a deep and tranquil state, with an ease and a rapidity, which plainly show us that we are really at work ! Whilst in the latter, the effort that we are often compelled to make, teaches us that there is a want of stimulus, and that our power is a mere plaything, when *benevolence* is not enlisted.

Mesmerism, like many other useful things that we have confided to our charge, is liable to some extent of abuse ; I am satisfied, however, that the apprehensions on this account, of many who have but partially examined the subject, are entirely ungrounded. From the tenor of my former remarks, it will be seen, I think, that the laws which govern mesmerism, will, in a most beautiful manner, confine the exercise of its higher powers, to those to whom it naturally and properly belongs. And I am fully persuaded that much more evil will result from ignorance, than design. Experience, too, fully corroborates this opinion ; for, whilst we have reports, almost weekly, of unpleasant results arising from the malpractice of some incompetent operator, we have but few, if even one solitary authentic instance, of the power having been designedly abused, since Mesmer first introduced the subject in Europe, nearly a century ago.

I anticipate that my theory of local absorption and exhaustion, given in my *modus operandi*, may, at first thought, be called into question in this place. I will, therefore, subject it to the test. There we see that the activity of a faculty of the operator, reduces the activity of the corresponding one of the subject : the same will

be the case here.—If the operator's design toward the subject is evil, the faculties of *destructiveness*, *secretiveness*, *cautiousness*, *combateness*, &c., will necessarily be active. This, indeed, would tend to exhaust the corresponding faculties of the subject; and could this state of things continue unchanged, the most dangerous results might be looked for. But, where is the thing in human shape so void of *conscientiousness*, that is able to keep up an unremitting determination to injure, in any way, a person who has just confided himself to his protection? And unless he is capable of exercising such natural, such demonical concentration, his purpose must utterly fail. For at most, he can only exercise his destructive faculties alternately with his better feelings, which will cause a confused re-action—the subject will become restless—will grow alarmed—and although he knows not why, will oppose the efforts of the operator; thus, a feeling of antipathy is established, and the susceptibility of the subject is destroyed. But even supposing that he should succeed in inducing the *state*, the subject, upon any injury being offered him, would immediately arouse his energies, and throw off the influence. For nineteen subjects out of twenty, are capable of coming out of the state at will; and the reason of their not generally doing so, is that their condition is a pleasant one. But just as soon as the *state* becomes unpleasant, just so soon, will they call their energies into action, and come out of it. And even in those cases in which they do not possess this power, their failing in their attempt to exercise it, will throw them into convulsions; which is the most disastrous consequence that I can conceive, of actual *designed* abuse of the mesmeric power.

I cannot, however, be too positive in my denunciations against the attempts of persons to mesmerize, who have never examined the nature of the subject, especially when their motive is mere curiosity. In attempting to relieve the suffering, they will be less likely to do harm; but even should they do so, would be far more excusable, than under the former circumstances.

From an unwary practice of this kind, I have known very serious consequences to ensue. Persons are thrown into a profound mesmeric *state*, from which the *untutored* operator finds it impossible to arouse them; and the most fearful, and painful convulsions often result from such temerity. During my visit to Easton, last summer, I was called to remove the influence from a young man who had been suffering painful spasms and convulsions, for forty-eight hours, in consequence of having been mesmerized by an incompetent person. Whilst in Lebanon, Pa., last December, I was called about midnight; when I arrived, I found the family in the utmost consternation, on account of a young lady being thrown into a deep mesmeric state, by a child only eight years old, from which state, they found it impossible to arouse her. But I need not multiply instances; I have said enough to show the reader

that certain laws are connected with this power, without a competent knowledge of which, it is a thing that should not be tampered with.

I consider it of no small importance, that the mesmerizer should possess good mental parts; for the impressions made by re-absorption, are often permanent. But to discuss this matter in detail, would occupy more room than I can here allot to it.

CHAPTER IV.

There is a stage in mesmerism, in which the subject tells us that *he sees heaven*, &c. This is analogous, if not identical with the ecstatic state of religious enthusiasts. The most material difference that I have marked, is the greater degree of coolness exhibited in the former case. I have not unfrequently listened to the most unpassioned, connected, and majestically sublime descriptions given by my subjects, of the world of spirits—in excellent keeping with the vision of Paul. I took a subject out of this state, who was fully conscious of having spent a whole year in heaven; and retained a distinct recollection of all that had passed there. Now, I am not prepared to say that my subjects held an *actual* communication with departed spirits, &c., yet, from what I already know of mesmerism, I have no philosophic evidence that they did not. It must be admitted, however, that the descriptions which they give us, may generally be ascribed to impressions which they have received in some other manner.

Finally. A subject under mesmeric influence, may be made to experience any variety of sensation, which may be suggested to his susceptibility. He may be made to feel hot or cold, hungry, &c. He may be made to partake of a hearty dinner, with all the sensations of one who is really eating; and, even if hungry before being mesmerized, may be taken out of the state with his appetite fully satisfied, and remain fully convinced that he has eaten! In fact, I can conceive of no impression whatever, that he may not be made to experience!

In perusing an assiduous investigation of this important subject, I have spared no pains whatever, to arrive at its true laws. At every step that I have taken, I have been startled by the light of some new phenomenon. In testing the power which one mind possesses over another, I have often stood amazed at what I myself have done. I see that mesmerism has suddenly spread out to our view, a new, extensive, and fertile field of moral philosophy, which the mind of Plato, of Democritus, of Des Cartes, of Bacon,

of Locke, of Leibnitz, and of Reid, never entered ; and what may we not expect from a faithful gleanings of its productions ? When we bring the conditions of natural somnambulism, trance, religious excitement, dreaming, &c., under the laws of mesmerism, have we not a light thrown upon them, of which our most sanguine hopes never before dreamed ? When we find ourselves possessed of feelings and notions of which we would fain be free, we refer them to the laws of mesmerism, and from them expect relief. Nor are we any longer at loss to account for the phenomena of persuasion, love, attachment, friendship, &c., with their opposites. We can also see reason in the laws of mesmerism, why the sympathetic parts of systems, have an affinity for each other.—This will inform us why women are inclined to kissing in their salutations, why men join their hands, and why the natives of the South Sea Islands join the ends of their noses, on similar occasions. They inform us, too, why we are inclined to embrace those of whom we are fond. They reveal the secret of the mysterious power which has ever been justly attributed to lover's eyes ; and explain why the hands of trembling lovers are wont to meet ; and why, when they come in contact, a mysterious, thrilling sensation is sent throughout the whole system.

By a philosophic and impartial investigation of this profound subject, we are enabled to discern a beam of rational light shedding its grateful rays upon many of the most important passages of the Holy Writ, which have heretofore been shrouded in mystery so dense and incomprehensible, that they have not only made skeptics of all rational men, but have exhausted the faith of even the most devoted bigots. For whether the ancient prophets, the Witch of Endor, Jesus Christ and his apostles ever enquired into the *modus operandi* of what is now called mesmerism, or not, doubtless they were well acquainted with the existence of this power and its principal results. And whether the theologians of the present day, are willing to take up the sublime study of this subject, and, by giving it the zealous attention which its dignity, importance, and profundity demand, avail themselves of an invaluable assistance in their professional expositions, or not, doubtless the time is come, when the incongruous, artificial readings of many passages of the Holy Scriptures, are often heard from the pulpit, with feelings of mingled pity and disgust for the timorous dupe of either his own ignorance, or his too great devotedness to the established dictates of man, in preference to those of his reason, his conscience, and the true spirit of the Sacred Record.

By an examination, too, of this subject, we find no difficulty in explaining the causes which gave rise to the superstitious notions of witchcraft, and the sanguinary deeds which too often accompanied them. And one great lesson which we are all being taught by the havoc that mesmerism is making of our skepticism, is this,

namely : not to denounce any subject until we have examined it ; let its first appearance be ever so absurd or ridiculous.

I cannot close these hasty pages, without first soliciting the serious attention of physicians generally, to a thorough investigation of this subject, which bears an immediate relation between them and the greatest interests of mankind. I know that many who are engaged in the healing art, still remain skeptics upon this matter ; and I can only express my regret that they have been so unfortunate, as not to have met with circumstances which might have convinced them of their error. And whilst I acknowledge every due feeling of toleration for a moderate share of skepticism, in matters which at first seem repulsive to our reason, I cannot but think that there is sufficient light now abroad upon this subject, to arouse to action, the sleeping energies of every well wisher of mankind ; and as this light can no longer be hidden from the community, skepticism will no longer screen the ignorance of medical practitioners. But there are also many medical *willing* skeptics, who are fully convinced of the efficacy of mesmerism, yet fear to own it. They tell us that they have "*characters* to lose !" that they "do not wish their *names* mentioned, in connexion with mesmerism, for fear of injury to their *practice* !!" Can there be any imaginable, pusillanimous position, more repulsive to the feelings of nature, of justice, and of humanity than this? *Popular prejudice*, I know, makes sad inroads upon the moral courage of feeble man ; but I ask in very pity, how can any man, possessing one spark of human feeling, be moved by *mercenary* motives, to withhold his support from what he knows would be of benefit to his suffering patients? How can he, with a shadow of conscience, or of moral principle, for the sake of "filthy lucre," compare the lives and health of his confiding and supplicating patients, to the 'price of a few sordid dollars? He who *can* do this, certainly subjects himself to the just censure of every true friend of benevolence ; and renders himself unworthy of the name which marks his species. I do not wish to appear severe in this place, upon the faculty ; for I am pleading the cause of suffering humanity ! and call rather with the voice of supplication, than of demand. I wish, if possible, to impress the importance of the subject upon the minds of *all* who are engaged in the healing art—to encourage them to an investigation of it. They will find that their labors will be more than compensated by their acquaintance with this "*ne plus ultra*" of modern materia medica. And if any one should lose, for a while, the empty smiles of the prejudiced, or even be minus a few dollars at the end of the year, I fearlessly promise that he shall be doubly repaid, by the consciousness of having done his duty !

IN CONCLUSION. There is much yet to be learned of this subject. Much delicacy and patience are necessary in the investigation of it ; and every one who commences the investigation with skepti-

cal feelings, can only advance in his knowledge, step by step. It should be borne in mind, too, that throughout nearly the whole practical part of the subject, much depends on *susceptibility*, a branch which I intend to treat more largely on a future occasion than the limits of these pages could possibly permit. There are many other important branches too, belonging immediately to this subject, which I have entirely omitted, some, for want of space to explain them, and others, because they do not properly belong to a work, not professing to be a practical one. I have, however, in preparation, an elaborate work on Historical and Comparative Mesmerism; in which I shall fully discuss every thing that may seem to have a direct bearing upon the subject.

FINIS.





[From the Reading Gazette, Nov. 18, 1843.]

ASTONISHING RESULTS OF MESMERISM.

“Thou canst not administer to a mind diseased.”—*Shakespeare.*

Notwithstanding Shakspeare has thus written, events that have transpired during the present week have convinced me, that if Diseases of the Mind could not be removed in his day, they can in this; and I cannot rest satisfied without informing the afflicted, that ‘there is a Balm in Gilead,’ ‘a cure for wounded hearts.’

A few evenings since, being in company with Dr. Yorke, he for the gratification of the company, consented to magnetize a young lady, and while she was in the state, he was informed of a desire on the part of the lady to forget some circumstances which had lately occurred, and which were a source of great uneasiness to her. The Doctor having satisfied himself of the fact, immediately WILLED her to forget the circumstance and persons connected therewith; the result of which has been very satisfactory. The lady has not been able since to recall the name of any of the parties, denying ever having known them; and although the strictest watch has been kept upon her countenance, not the slightest emotion has been visible, even when the circumstances have been directly alluded to. Previous to the operation, however, she was moved to tears by the slightest allusion to them.

There have also been several other cases of a similar character, which have fallen under my notice, in which the power of Mesmerism as applied by Dr. Yorke, has been equally successful.

Any persons desirous of availing themselves of the efficacy of Mesmerism, and wishing to be more fully informed as to the correctness of the above statement, can, by referring to me, obtain ample evidence of its truth.

WILLIAM R. MILLER,

Franklin street.

Reading, Nov. 18, 1843..

NOTICE.

The Author of 'ABSORPTION,' will continue to impart instructions personally, and by letter, on the practical application of Mesmerism, to Medical Practitioners, generally, and other COMPETENT persons.

TERMS.—Per course FIFTY DOLLARS.

N. B. Single lessons, or letters, or any number less than a complete course, will be given at FIVE DOLLARS EACH, to such ONLY as have already obtained some knowledge of the subject.

REASON is the Philosopher's highway to truth. EXPERIENCE, the best monitor of even fools, has placed FACTS along for way-marks, to guide him on his journey. Hence :

“ He who *will* not reason, is a BIGOT ;

He who *cannot* reason, is a FOOL ;

And he who *dares* not reason, is a SLAVE.”

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